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No 13

A SERMON

Preached *May* 13. 1683. at the

Guild-Hall-Chappel,

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord MAYOR

AND

ALDERMEN

OF THE

City of London.

BY

John Cook, Rector of *Mersham* in *Kent*.

LONDON, ⊕ S. L

Printed for *Moses Pitt*, at the *Angel* in St. *Pauls* Churchyard, 1683.

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ROM. 12. VERS. 18.

If it be poſſible, as much as lyeth in you, live peaceably with all men.

ST. *Paul*, the Author of this Advice was, no doubt of it, well accompliſhed in all the lawful Rules and Arts of Civility and good Manners. His much Learning as it had not *made him mad*, ſo did it not, (as it is uſually more apt to do) any ways ſpoil his breeding or behaviour: We never find him infected with the haughty and moroſe humour of his Sect the *Phariſees*; Or if he formerly had been ſo, yet by becoming *Chriſtian*, he is altogether refined, and carries himſelf obliging and *peaceable* to all men.

So that *Chriſtianity* is no ſuch enemy to good Manners, no more than *Grace* is to Morality. Some are ſo much in love with ſeparation, that they will embrace it in any ſhape, tho' they diſtinguiſh themſelves and ſeparate from others by few other Marks and Characters then ſullen looks, rugged, and clowniſh geſtures, and by harſh and rude, as well as *unpeaceable* ways, of demeaning and expreſſing themſelves. As tho the Goſpel were to unteach men the laws of Society; and to put off the *old man*, was to put off the whole man, and

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put on the Brute; or Incivility were a branch of *Chriſtian Liberty*; mortification of the Fleſh might allow it to be the more froward and quarrelſom; and the pretence of plainneſs and down right honeſty, gave the priviledge of diſregarding, and *diſhonouring all men.*

But Saint *Paul* hath not ſo *learned Chriſt*, as to unlearn humanity. *Tertullus the Orator*, whoſe profeſſion it was (and he was hired to it) to flouriſh in Rhetorical Addreſſes, was not more Courtly, *Act.* 24. to *Felix the Governour*, then our *Apoſtle*, v. 10. *For as much as I know thou haſt been of many years a Judge unto this Nation, I do the more chearfully anſwer for my ſelf*: And by the way too, in his following Plea challenges all his Accuſers to tax him of the leaſt *unpeaceable or ſeditious* behaviour either in * *raiſing up the people*, or confronting them in the * *Temple with multitude or tumult*? And yet it was the cauſe of God, and neceſſity was laid upon him to Preach that Goſpel they all with violence oppoſed. Again, to King *Agrippa* Act. 26. 2, 3. his *Chriſtianity* allowed him as high Complements, *I think my ſelf happy, King* Agrippa, *becauſe I ſhall anſwer for my ſelf this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accuſed of the Jews; eſpecially, becauſe I know thee to be expert in all Cuſtoms and Queſtions, which are among the Jews: Wherefore I beſeech thee to hear me patiently.* With great deference to his authority and knowledge, nay, and to his honour and goodneſs, tho' a Heathen or little better, and otherwiſe very obnoxious. And afterwards moſt obligingly and affectionately wiſhes him *altogether ſuch a one as he was himſelf excepting his bonds*; as good a Chriſtian as himſelf, but not the unhappy circumſtances of Fetters and Impriſonment. And to another *Magiſtrate* in the ſame Chapter who had unjuſtly caſt upon him the ſevere imputation of *madneſs*, he returns a moſt calm and ſober anſwer,

Act. 24. * v. 12. * v. 18.

Act. 26. 29.

answer, with the compellation of * *most noble Festus.* Thus *Christianity* even when most oppoſed ſtood in no need of paſſion, or violence, of Satyr or Rudeneſs to defend its priviledges; ſo that it was a rule of our *Apoſtle's* own practice to the utmoſt extent of an obliging temper; *as far as it was poſſible; and as much as lay in his power to live peaceably with all men.*

* v. 25.

Which Words do viſibly conſiſt of theſe Parts.

Firſt, The Rule, *Live peaceably with all men.*

Secondly, The Reſtraints or Exceptions, which are two.

1. *If it be poſſible.* Which Words ſeem to relate to thoſe we have to do with. *If it be poſſible*, that is, If we are to deal with men of peaceable Spirits and inclinations, ſuch as can be made friends or kept in with; intimating that it is impoſſible to keep the peace with ſome ſort of Diſpoſitions.

2. *As much as lyeth in you*: Which muſt relate to us; that is, to our utmoſt power and ability, in the uſe of all lawful means; but it lieth not in our power, or, it is not lawful, to live peaceably with all men upon all conditions.

1. The Rule, *Live peaceably with all men.*

A rule of Practice that is ſo much the deſign of *Chriſtianity*, that in truth there are but very few caſes, wherein you can ſeparate the one from the other; and none wherein Charity (which is the *bond of peace*) can be ſuſpended, for *Charity never faileth*, or never ceaſeth to oblige. And tho' ſome divided Parties may in their ſeveral ways exerciſe many Acts of true and ſubſtantial Worſhip, yet whilſt the Members thereof retain in their hearts any unpeaceable diſpoſition, or *bitter envying* (tho' they call it * zeal) againſt another Party; all the effects of their Religion muſt neceſſarily be null and void: Becauſe in our

Jam. 3. 14. Εἰ δὲ ζῆλον πικρὸν ἔχετε καὶ ἐριθείαν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν.

Religion

Religion we can find no ſort of diſpenſation for an uncharitable temper: ſaith the *Author of it, *peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*: and ſhould the Primitive Chriſtians have deſpoiled it of that honourable Enſign, it would have certainly been cruſht in its very Infancy: And now were it not for that ſecurity, *The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, the unhappy Contentions about it (the worſt of Devils) would ſoon haſten its deſtruction: *Atheiſts* and *Deiſts* enough would quickly be of Counſel to perſwade Governours they may rule more at eaſe without it.

*Joh. 14. 27.

For how monſtrous a change is that, that *Chriſtianity* ſo pure, innocent, and *peaceable* in it's Originals, ſhould be made the occaſion of the moſt miſchievous brawls and quarrels in the World. And what is moſt unlucky, our niceſt *Reformers* and greateſt Pretenders to Goſpel-purity are the leaſt ſcrupulous in this caſe; who are ever and anon breaking out into Tumult upon every little occaſion, and always venting their ill-will more eſpecially againſt thoſe, that are, at leaſt, in the next rank to them of true *Reformers*: Whereas in truth, it will be hard for them to determine, how many, and what ſort of errours, may be more ſafely tolerated, then the breach of peace in a *Chriſtian Society*. We read of *Jews* and *Samaritans* that were much of the ſame Religion; yet hated and worried one another, more than they did *Pagans*: And *Turks* and *Perſians*, tho' they differ not in their Great, but in the two Leſſer Propacts, perſecute one another with more rage than they do Chriſtians: But this is the latitude of their ſeveral Religions; the *Jews* were for temporal Ends, and viſibly look't no further. *Mahomet* was altogether for raiſing an *Empire*, and *Paradice* was but a diſtant Bait

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to promote preſent deſigns: Avarice, Ambition and Cruelty will be ſure to come in for the means, where temporal Gain and Glory are the Ends. But *Chriſtianity* bars all enmity, even in its own defence; advances in no Kingdom, but what is purely ſpiritual; diſturbs not the World in any of its precedent Rights or Settlements; and hath no other deſign, but * *Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good will towards Men.* * Luk. 2. 14.

Yet how dreadful is it to conſider, that tho' we are under the influence of ſuch a heavenly *Religion*, paſſions fly higher, and even beyond their natural bounds: for we may plainly obſerve, that diſſention, hatred and rancour, is not ſo violent and irreconcileable betwixt extream oppoſites, who diſſent utterly (as *Pagan* and *Chriſtians* for example) as it commonly is betwixt ſubordinate Profeſſors, who agree upon generals, and for the main ſubſtance, but diſſent in particulars or application. Thoſe of the *Church of Rome* at this day rather tolerate, do not ſo extremely hate a *Turk*, a *Jew*, a *Pagan*, as they do a *Proteſtant*: The one they will burn, but pity and commiſerate the other. And ſome *Proteſtants* to be quit with them, do in affection and kind uſage too plainly prefer a *Heathen* or *Mahometan* before them; (a wonderful Charity to the honeſt *Pagan*:) And will ſooner tolerate the moſt blaſphemous *Heretick*; or the moſt profeſſed impudent *Atheiſt*, that in all companies vents his horrid principles with Glory and Triumph. But here the points of oppoſition may ſeem conſiderable, and ſo the enmity the more allowable: We are more nicely diſtinguiſht of late amongſt our ſelves by *modern Names*, and yet the hatred as high and vehement as any we have yet mentioned; fighting in times of peace, both for the ſame *eſtabliſht Government*; both (as is pretended too) for the ſame *Proteſtant Religion*; both glorying in their

diſtinctive Titles, and yet the worſt that ever were caſt upon Chriſtians.

Thus, when one would think we were moſt nearly united, we are moſt bitterly divided; *and our worſt foes are thoſe of our own houſhold*, even the *houſhold of* the ſame *faith*. The *Jews* thought themſelves allowed to hate their enemy, an *Alien*, ſo long, as they loved their Neighbour, that is, a *Jew*: but we more barbarouſly make our converſation the reverſe of theirs; and as tho' unable to carry it further, vomit out our filthy malice at the next doors, tho' the Church of Chriſt allows no enemies at all, but like it, *Charity* is *Oecumenic* and *Univerſal*; nay like God himſelf Infinite and Eternal, it knows no bounds of love, *no reſpect of perſons*, and muſt *never fail*: Surely then *Chriſtianity* muſt quite fail, utterly vaniſh and periſh, ſo long as we are at variance amongſt our ſelves. Wo to that party by whom the *offence* cometh.

But the words of the *Text* relating to common converſation, we ought to conſider the nature of *peace* and the obligation to it in every ſingle perſon: and if there be an indiſpenſable neceſſity of it in every mans private practice, we ſtand ſurely more deeply obliged in publick Communities: and if men too did accuſtom themſelves to a Chriſtian temper, and to conquer their paſſions upon all common occaſions, they would eaſily become the more peaceable and tractable Subjects.

Firſt, Then a foundation of *peace* will beſt be laid in the paſſive inoffenſiveneſs of our lives, in a firm and reſolute innocence in all our actions, by which malice is baffled and can lay no hold: Good and honeſt men will join themſelves unto us, and the wicked will *go backward, and fall to the ground*; * *when a mans ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*, ſays the wiſe man. But we need not look further than

* Prov. 16. 7.

than the Contexts, both for this paſſive innocence in our Chriſtian deportment, and alſo what more active duties of Love and Charity are required of us in order to *peace*.

Vers. 16. *Be of the ſame mind one toward another*; which muſt be morally interpreted, in mutual affection one toward another, an agreement in the main ends of Religion, Religious practice; according to that of v. 9. *Let love be without diſſimulation: abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good*; or that of *St. *Peter. *Eſchew evil, and do good, ſeek peace and enſue it.* It cannot poſſibly be meant, an agreement in judgment, for that you know cannot be forced; one mans mind (tho' he would himſelf) cannot alwayes be bent to anothers perſwaſion: Judgments may run like parallel Lines, good actions will make us concenter in one point: **follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* They muſt always be conjoined, and then they will preſerve one another. Yet there are ſome among us that are great pretenders too, to *Holineſs*, who value no *agreement*, like that in *principles*: If they can but meet with a man that jumps with them in Sentiments, eſpecially in thoſe darling ones of Sedition and Faction, by which the Government in *Church* or *State* is diſguſted, he is cheriſht and embrac'd as a knowing man, well inclined, and diſpoſed to good things; and if he be a great Man, then he is the only *Patriot, a defender of true Religion:* altho' in other Principles he is a down-right *Atheiſt*, a ſcorner of Religion and all that belongs to it, and therefore ſure enough plays but the Hypocrite in this compliance for ends plain enough to be diſcovered; and in his morals, the greateſt debauché upon the Earth, the moſt profligate liver; nay ſometimes a notorious Patron, and publick defender too of the Liber-

*1 Pet. 3. 11. Pſal. 34. 14.

*Heb. 12. 14.

ty of Vice, as well as that of Religion: But all is expiated, by being for the Cauſe.

This is but a ſorry agreement then, to agree in the Principles of diſſention: We ſhall all *be of the ſame mind one toward another* as to the main fundamental, if we reſolutely unite in the exemplary practice of Virtue and true Religion: then every one will give a ſound Teſtimony of the Truth of his own way: and be ſure the ſame pious diſpoſition will never ſuffer us to break the peace. This is the well ſeaſoned temper of mind againſt all rottenneſs and Corruption: * *have Salt in your ſelves, and have peace one with another.* And this is the cheif Foundation of Love, the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

* *Mar.* 9. 50.

But to go on with our *Apoſtle*, in the ſame Verſ. *Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate*; or rather * *to low things*: *be not wiſe in your own conceits.* Humility bears as near a relation to the Goſpel, as peace; and is the beſt preparative for a peaceable converſation. It is never uneaſie or froward; but acquieſces in all the appointments of Heaven: Gods providence is irreſiſtable and uncontroulable; and ſo is ſecular Government, becauſe it is his *Ordinance*: and therefore dares not ſoar ſo high as to diſturb the peace that way. It can be no leſs than a Bill of utter excluſion of Providence from the Earth (which formerly hath been reputed down-right Atheiſm) not to allow unto God the ſole ordering of the *high Things* of the World; who ſhall be his Repreſentative upon the Earth, and exerciſe Soverign power over his Creatures; for in *lower Matters* men are apt to think they may be their own Carvers, and can turn all things according to their own Wills. What are bad times and publick grievances to an humble Chriſtian? Whoſe Duty is with patience to encounter the moſt acute affliction in his own ſingle perſon,

* Τοῖς ταπεινοῖς. *Neutral.*

ſon, and ſurely then a common Calamity may be endured with peace. *Prayers and Tears* are not ſo deſperate a Remedy, but he can find conſolation enough without any other; according to our *Apoſtle* v. 12. *Rejoycing in hope, patient in Tribulation, continuing inſtant in prayer.* Religion is his deareſt *property*, and that can only be taken away from *Hypocrites*: *high Things* may endanger his integrity, but a *low Eſtate* will keep him cloſe to the grand End and deſign both of his Life and Religion, that is, the Salvation of his own Soul; and therefore thence hath no need of fears to diſturb his own, or the peace of others.

Pride of Old cauſed the firſt Schiſm and Diſturbance even in a heavenly Society, among the very Angels themſelves; and ſurely then may be likely to do as much miſchief amongſt frail Chriſtians. But to keep cloſe to our precept: *Be not wiſe in your own conceits*; that Pride which ariſes from the pretences of *divine Knowledge* is the worſt enemy to *Peace*. The firſt Hereticks in the Church took their very name from ſuch a pretence of *Knowledge* or *Science falſly ſo called*; as appears by our *Apoſtle*'s deſcription of them, and frequent invectives againſt them, as the only diſturbers of the Churches quiet. How troubleſome is the World now become, by being infatuated with the ſame Conceits? The *Papiſts* were barbarous in keeping the people from the *Scriptures*; but let us not commend their policy in our enlargement, by a more barbarous way of uſing them: Every man *wreſting* them to the maintainance of his own *prejudices*, and making them but the *Oracles* of his own *Paſſions*. Writings of that ſimple and innocent contexture, are the more capable of ill-uſage, eſpecially if they fall into the hands of thoſe that are really ignorant, but great affecters of Knowledge and Novelty, and are full-filled with malice, to make them the more acute

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Interpreters on their own ſide. But this is not fair dealing with Laws, much leſs with thoſe that are ſacred: It is fit, that every Subject ſhould be well acquainted with the *Civil Laws* of his Nation in which he lives; but he cannot make his own Interpretation of them, ſo much as a Law to himſelf; for then perhaps he would never be an Offender: they muſt paſs through the mouths of *Magiſtrates* and *Judges*, or the proceedings of *Courts of Juſtice*, before they come to execution or final determination: And ſurely it would be moſt conducive to peace, if all *divine Obligations* had ſuch a regular conveyance to the people; and not thoſe that are rude and illiterate, (but full of wiſe conceits) ſuffered to pick and garble ſome Texts to juſtifie their own oppoſitions, without conſidering the ſcope and main end of the whole. Therefore if the *Scriptures* muſt lie proſtrate to common interpretation, this Rule ought always to prevail: That the grand duties of *Humility*, *Peace*, and univerſal *Charity* are therein delivered in the moſt plain, expreſs, and intire manner as to all Points and Circumſtances of Obligation; and therefore whatſoever places are erected againſt thoſe fundamentals of Practice, deſtroy the very Eſſence and Being of Chriſtianity.

But we muſt aſcend higher yet for peace ſake, and diſarm our ſelves even of all ability to diſturb it: In the Verſes immediately before and following the Text, all manner of Revenge is interdicted. *Recompence to no man evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written Vengeance is mine, I will repay ſaith the Lord.* And Verſe the laſt, *Be not overcome of evil*: So that to Revenge, is to be overcome; and not to return the blow, is to carry away the Victory. That which the high Spirits and Huffs of the World call Courage and Generoſity, is in truth meer Cowar-

Verſ. 17. 19.

Cowardice, rather lying under the affront, and slavishly yielding to the Passion; macerating themselves with malice, and doing the Enemies work for him: It is a Worm, the lowest creeping Creature, that turns again. Whereas the Man that bears, is truly great and valiant; returns bruised and wounded in the Cause, an undeniable Testimony that he hath fought, and been in great dangers; and hath overcome too, because by this passive behaviour, he hath put an End to the Combate, Peace being the Atchievment and Ensign of Victory. And this Doctrine descends purely from our *Saviour* himself, in much the same terms, altogether to the same sence: **I say unto you that ye resist not evil*, &c. He that strikes the *Second blow* seems in his Law to be deepest in the Guilt; and that with reason, for first he causes the breach of Peace; and secondly, Invades the Prerogative of God to whom Vengeance belongs. * *Mat.* 5. 39.

Now if this must be our Passive behaviour one towards another: Is it not strange, that *passive Obedience* to Magistrates should be so much exploded in this Age; as an antiquated duty, whose Obligation did not reach beyond the third Century, when Religion became a Law of the Empire? When it is plainly a Duty we owe to all men, and we must submit our selves one to another: Nay every man hath in some sence so *Arbitrary* and *Uncontroulable* a power over us, that we stand obliged to a *Non-resistance*; and you see we can't return their injuries, but must suffer under their oppressions; tho' they unjustly take away *a Coat*, *a Cloak*, our nearest *property*, we must yield up both, rather than ingage in a quarrel, or break the peace. And must Governours only be plagued, and feel the rancour of our Malice? Surely as long as *Patience*, *Peace*, and *Humility* continue in force among Christians; Superiours above all others have the most right to receive the benefits of those Duties.

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This is the ſureſt way to peace on all hands: Return no injury, and you blunt the dart, you baffle all affronts and wrongs, and ſhame and confound the Deſigns and Plots of malicious Men: and in a true ſence are *more than Conquerours*, by vanquiſhing your paſſions, that are moſt againſt you, and by bringing over your other Enemies by ſuch kind forbearance. *Be not therefore overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.* Which laſt Words lead us to thoſe more active duties of Love and Charity required of us in order to peace.

Secondly, We muſt not only be paſſively innocent and inoffenſive, but actively obliging too in all inſtances of Love: Induſtriouſly contributing both to the ſpiritual and temporal welfare of others. Verſ. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly Love, in honour preferring one another.* Anothers intereſt, and anothers credit, a Chriſtian conſcience muſt make its own or more; for do but obſerve how ſtrictly we are bound up, on all hands, and we find no diſpenſation for it; and then judge how nicely accomptable we are in other mens matters. For Firſt, on the one hand, in caſe of injury to others, we are bound to reſtitution, or elſe Repentance is invalid, or in truth no repentance at all; for he that truly repents, would revoke the Action as far as he is able; and that is, by making Reſtitution, as far as poſſible: and if the injury be to the good Name of another, it is the greater, and the Reparation more difficult, and yet as fully obliging; for no man ought to loſe his credit at a cheaper rate, than his Goods and Chattels. Secondly, On the other hand; in caſe of injury received from others of either ſort, we are as indiſpenſably bound to forgive: it is an abſolute condition of the Covenant of Grace, and we may as well hope to be ſaved without a Chriſt, as without the condition that Chriſt our Saviour hath abſolutely

solutely fixed and determined. * *If you forgive men their Trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their Trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your Trespasses.* And this no doubt, shall be the standing Rule at the day of Judgment, and every *Mouth* thereby must needs *be stopped*; for with what face can we look for pardon of the highest and most numerous Crimes, from an infinite Majesty; when we cannot here forget or forgive the least injury or most petty affront amongst our selves: Nay we give it the reputation of Courage, and Greatness of Spirit, deeply to resent and severely to repel. * *Mat.* 6. 14, 15. *Mar.* 11. 25, 26.

These are the Measures, I say, that will then be taken: Our blessed Saviour hath Witnessed the same in the design of that Parable * of the unmerciful Servant, who having the vaste Sum of ten thousand Talents remitted to him by his Prince upon his Submission and humble prostration before him, yet would not forgive or so much as forbear an inconsiderable debt of a hundred Pence to one of his fellow Servants that fell down at his feet, and implored his mercy in as humble a manner: whereupon the cruel wretch is *delivered to the Tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto his lord:* and upon that Application is made by our Lord; * *so likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their Trespasses.* * *Mat.* 18. * *v.* 35.

I have the more exactly set down these two Points of obligation of Restitution and forgiveness in Cases of wrong done or received; to shew, 1. The most exact equity of the Christian Law. 2. The most affectionate care and most inward concern that must be used in Anothers welfare, as tho it were really more than our own. And, 3. More especially to shew the vast bounds our Religion hath raised for the preservation of peace, and the utter exclusion of all possible malice and dissen-

tion: for the practice of these Duties must necessarily bind down all Passions on both sides; and reduce all our turbulent humours to the level of Peace and Order.

But we must hasten to those more visible instances of Love and Amity which our Apostle sets down as conducive to Peace, v. 13. *Distributing to the necessity of the Saints; given to hospitality.* *Charity* of that kind procures the Prayers and Blessings of the Poor, and esteem and reverence from the rich; besides an infinite fund for the World to come; for in the Court of Heaven the Poor have the best interest; * *they shall receive you*, says our Saviour, *into everlasting habitations.* And *Hospitality* too in Scripture language is feeding the Poor, those that want, and can't repay or invite again: Not that which is vain-glorious or sensual; down right luxury, or debauchery; much less that which is done out of a popular and seditious intent, to make Parties and raise an interest to do mischief. If we abound, the Poor have a certain right to our Over-plus, and therefore this bountiful Charity in the Psalms and other places of Scripture goes by the Name of *Righteousness* and *Justice*: * *the Righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the Poor* (true Distributive Justice) *his righteousness endureth for ever.* And those of the * *Houshold of Faith* have the neareſt right in Reason and Religion; *as we are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another*, v. 5. And our Saviour takes it to himself; * *in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* And this Community in Affection must reach to all instances of Charity, as is further urged by our *Apostle* in that passionate compliance one with another on all reasonable occasions, *v.* 15. *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*: for which in another place he gives

* *Luk.* 16. 9.

* *Psal.* 112. 6. 9.

* *Gal.* 6. 10.

* *Mat.* 25. 40.

* 1 *Cor.* 12. 26.

us a natural reason: *Whether one Member ſuffer all the Members ſuffer with it: Or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it; therefore the Members ſhould have the ſame care one of another.* Conſider then how nicely provident Chriſtianity is to keep us cloſe together. Nay our very Enemy cannot juſtly be excluded from our favours, v. 20. *If he do hunger do thou feed him: if he thirſt give him drink, for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap Coals of Fire on his head.* An expreſſion howſoever harſh it may ſound, that muſt not be interpreted as an intended aggravation of his guilt, or a deſigned giving him up to the Vengeance of God (*whom we are to bleſs and not curſe*, v. 14. and for whom we are to * *Pray*;) but an accumulation of repeated favours upon him, by which, as the hardeſt Metal by heaping upon it hot burning Coals, he would be melted down into ſoftneſs and compaſſion, and run together with us in mutual Love and Kindneſs.

* *Ma.* 5. 44. *Luke* 23. 34.

Judge now whether this be not true Chriſtian Doctrine, intended by Chriſt and his Apoſtles indiſpenſably to oblige all Chriſtians, and *throughout all Ages*: and if an Angel from Heaven ſhould Preach a contrary, we are are no more to beleive him than if he ſhould Preach down all the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith. And judg again, whether our Chriſtianity hath not laid down ſufficient Rules for the inviolable preſervation of *Peace*, according to which if we would but frame our diſpoſitions, it is next to impoſſible, but that we ſhould *live peaceably with all men*: And which Rules too, are ſuch eſſential parts of Chriſtian practice, that there is not ſuch another Lie and Cheat in the whole World as the Profeſſion of that Religion without ſubmitting to theſe Duties.

2. I am now come to the *Reſtraints* or *Exceptions* in the Text, which will fall within a very narrow compaſs; for the Duty is ſo plain and expreſs, that there-

will very little work remain for the niceſt Caſuiſt.

The Firſt is, *if it be poſſible*; if we are to deal with thoſe that can poſſibly be obliged to Peace; for ſome men will make it impoſſible to keep Peace with them.

Altho' our Religion hath preſcribed ſuch exact Rules for the preſervation of Peace, yet thoſe that have put them in practice to the very height of, if not above the Precept, have not been able to bind down the reſtleſs malice of wicked men. *John the Baptiſt* and *Chriſt Jeſus* might ſurely ſooner have done it than any; who came not only to ſave, and do all manner of good, but to oblige and ſweeten the World in their abode upon Earth: and lo took different ways in their ſeveral behaviours to captivate all if poſſible; but the World would not be pleaſed even with ſuch excellent *Miniſters of the Goſpel* as theſe.

The Firſt was auſtere, reſerv'd and mortified in his Converſation (not moroſe and ſullen, an Enemy to none but his own Fleſh) one that ſhut himſelf up from the World and its enjoyments, following only his proper buſineſs, for which he was ſent, Preaching *Repentance and the Kingdom that was then coming*: And ſpending the reſt of his time in Faſting, Meditation, and ſolitary Retirement: all which, one would have thought, ſhould have procured reverence and admiration of his perſon, at leaſt Security; and ſtruck into them an awful obſervance of his Life and Doctrine: Who could be offended with this behaviour?

The *bleſſed Jeſus* took another way; (tho' the higheſt example too of the former Duties) uſing a more popular but moſt innocent freedom amongſt them: kept all Compaanies alike, frequented their houſes, made his ſeveral aſſignations, was preſent at their merry meetings, their Marriages and other Feaſts: That by ſuch humble and affable condeſcentions (an allowable policy to one that could not miſcarry) he might take all opportunities

nities to bring them to his Kingdom, and by his kind compliance and ſociable familiarity draw and allure * them into a Covenant for their *own Salvation.*

* 2 *Cor.* 12. 12.

Yet ſee the Malevolent cenſure the World paſſes upon them both. * *John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay he hath a Devil: the Son of a man came eating and drinking, and they ſay, behold a man gluttonous, and a Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners.* The one for his ſtrict reſerv'dneſs muſt be condemned for a Hypocrite, that he had a *Devil* in his heart, and was inwardly as bad as others, as wicked men uſually pronounce of thoſe that are better than themſelves! The *other* for his open but innocent carriage, paſſes for a luxurious and looſe Liver, popular and ſeditious, one that kept ill Company, and was a friend and favourer of the worſt of men. At laſt, the one loſt his head amongſt them, and that on a mere trifle. The *other is Crucified* as the vileſt Malefactor: *but indeed for the ſins of the whole World.*

* *Mat.* 11. 18, 19.

I may fairly add one other grand example, that only ought to come after theſe; and that is of our late *Martyr'd Soveraign*, who had to do with ſuch another people. In his *perſonal Capacity* (to uſe their own diſtinction) he was even an example to his Subjects of the moſt Chriſtian converſation, of Piety and true Zeal, of Patience and Meekneſs, of Peaceableneſs and Charity; and of many other ſignal Virtues truly becoming ſo great a *Prince*, it was unhappy they ſhould prove ſo fatal. And in his *politick capacity* his condeſcentions are too numerous to be reckoned up; they will make up the character of the moſt *Gracious*, if the leſs *politick Prince*: He ſacrificed all but his Religion to make them peaceable and quiet; but only proved, that it is out of the power of the greateſt *Monarch* upon Earth, to ſatisfie an enraged Multitude. He muſt neceſſarily fall in the attempt; in return for his favours, they heap up all the evils,

evils of the Nation upon his *Royal Innocent* head, and then cut it off.

Here it is out of the power of the higheſt Chriſtianity to preſerve the Peace: and at this time perhaps out of the reach of the greateſt Wiſdom upon Earth, nay tho' aſſiſted too from Heaven, to put us into ſuch a frame or conſtitution of *Religious Worſhip* (for *Religion* is always the factious Cry) as more to ſatisfie theſe Tumultuous Complaints, than what is now eſtabliſht. If one party ſhould come in, we may juſtly fear the reſt would ſtand out, but the more obſtinately, as thinking themſelves diſregarded, and no allowances made for them: and would certainly encreaſe by daily additions of thoſe that love Diſſention for Diſſention ſake; out of malice or an habitual diſlike of every thing that is commanded; out of prejudice, or diſcontent; out of novelty, or affectation, to be pointed at, and taken notice of, as men of diſcerning judgments, and ſingular Piety, that will not go the common way of all men: for in truth theſe ill qualities have made up more *tender Conſciences*, than ever true Religion did. And if a Model ſhould be framed to take in all; our late confuſions give us a ſufficient proof, how deſtructive it would be to *Religion*, and little conducive to *Peace*. In this Caſe then all we can do, is to be as inoffenſive as poſſible, ſtill *to ſeek Peace and enſue it*; to retain Charity within our own hearts, and to exerciſe as much to them, as they are capable of receiving, and will leave them without excuſe: But *Governours* to whom it belongs muſt try other expedients, according to their Wiſdom and Power, for neceſſity lies upon them by all poſſible means to keep the Peace.

But according to our Method we muſt deſcend to particular Converſation: Enmity to Peace (like the *Author* of it) appears in various ſhapes; ſome men in their

their natural tempers are froward and quarrelſome, ſuſpitious and jealous, and cheriſh the humour by ſpecious Names of greatneſs of Spirit and ſenſe of Honour, and ſo conceive an injury where there is none; cannot pardon one tho' upon ſubmiſſion, nor be obliged by a free Pardon from another; becauſe they well know they could not forgive in the like Caſe, and therefore ſtill keep up their Reſentments. And if they receive a favour, they diminiſh it, or will have it thought their due; becauſe unwilling or not able to return it: Nay perhaps cruelly wiſh the Donor out of the way, that the Obligation might likewiſe vaniſh. Others are poſſeſſed with as ill natur'd ſins, ſuch as Ambition and Covetouſneſs, and then *Peace* can never be preſerv'd but when conducive to thoſe Ends: In a Word there are thoſe that will never be obliged; and thoſe that will never leave off oppreſſion.

Some again, upon pretence of purer *Religion* (Religion too often comes in to diſturb the Peace) take upon them to cenſure and revile thoſe of a different way, as reprobate Enemies to God, and conſequently unworthy of the favour of his Saints: Are therefore churliſh and moroſe, and think no reproach, and ſometimes no injury too great to be caſt upon them they have already judged to be the wicked men of the World.

Our *Apoſtle* deſcribes them altogether in this Epiſtle. **Their Throat is an open Sepulchre, with their Tongues they have uſed deceit, the poiſon of Aſps is under their Lips: Whoſe Mouth is full of Curſing and Bitterneſs: their Feet are ſwift to ſhed Blood. Deſtruction and Miſery are in their ways, and the ways of Peace have they not known.* With ſuch as theſe it may be impoſſible to ſecure an actual *Peace*, yet we may eaſily preſerve our ſelves from the guilt of a breach, if according to the

* *c.* 3. *v.* 13. 14, 15, 16, 17.

2. Reſtraint or Exception; *as much as lyeth in us*, in

in the use of all lawful means we indeavour *to live peaceably with all men*: Which implieth, that we must not submit to all terms of *Peace*, and that upon previous or higher Obligations, which are either. 1. Natural. 2. Civil. 3. Christian, and will soon be laid down.

1. Every one knows that Nature obligeth us to guard and defend our Lives, our good Names which are sometimes dearer to us, our fortunes too by which both are maintained; and likewise what naturally belongs to our charge, or is committed to our trust (which we can in Conscience less renounce than our own) from all the violent assaults of wicked men that have no Authority over us: Here it cannot lie in our Power to secure the Peace, resistance is extorted from us and we must contend. And it will be the fairest dealing, and the likeliest way to bring Peace at the End, to fly to the Magistrate for Protection, who is, as the Apostle owns him in this very Discourse of Peace, * Ἔκδικος εἰς ὀργὴν *our Revenger for wrath* in Cases of such extremity: otherwise we must fall into Confusion, which neither the Laws of Nature, nor the Laws of God can possibly intend.

*C. 13. v. 4.

2. Civil Government hath pre-ingaged us in the preservation of *Peace*, for that is its main End. And we must not out of a pretended peaceable Spirit unite with the Enemies of Government, nor comply with them in promoting any opposition against it, either reviling of it, or raising or encouraging false fears and jealousies about it: *We must not rejoice with them that rejoice* at its miscarriages; *nor weep with those that weep* upon causless apprehensions of its present or approaching oppressions; much less must we hinder or discourage the Execution of its Laws. This would be falling out with a whole Kingdom, in Complement to a factious Brother: It is a contradiction then to be peaceable, and fall out

out with that which is to preſerve the Peace; but more eſpecially to Chriſtianity, who hath not more expreſs and entire commands for any one Duty, as for that of Submiſſion to Secular Government, not ſo much as leaving a Clauſe for its own preſervation; or a *Salvò* for a holy Rebel: We need look no further than the beginning of the next Chapter (for it is all one intire Diſcourſe in order to Peace) for our whole charge in this matter; *We muſt all be ſubject to the higher Powers*, humane Authority; for in truth it is Divine and Sacred, the *Ordinance of God*: And the Magiſtrate is the *Miniſter of God for good, and a Revenger for Wrath*; both for our good, whether ſevere or gentle, for God himſelf is both the one and the other as the condition of his Creatures ſhall require: And leſt Religion ſhould come in for a pretence, *we muſt be ſubject for Conſcience ſake*, out of a true tender Conſcience becauſe we are Chriſtians: And the Penalty of Reſiſtance is no leſs than *Damnation*, that is, from God, not Judgment in this World only: for Factions oftentimes bear up with Triumph; and Rebellion gets a better Name by being ſucceſsful: Therefore,

3. Chriſtian obligations are the higheſt: and we muſt not violate a poſitive Law of God, to preſerve our Lives or Fortunes; no, nor obey a Magiſtrate and thereby *deny Chriſt*, that is, renounce his expreſs Commands; much leſs for the enjoyment of peace and quiet Society with wicked men. *Have no fellowſhip* (ſays our Apoſtle) **with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* When the Wanton and Drunkard would have you favour, or be a Companion with him in his ſenſuality: When the prophane would have you ſilent at his blaſphemies; and the Atheiſt have you aſſent to his pretended reaſonings: When the Envious would have you be pleaſed with his malicious invectives, and join with him

* *Eph.* 5. 11.

in decrying his Enemies (as ſuch wicked men often expect:) When the factious Schiſmatick ſhall require your ſubmiſſion to his ill-natur'd Sentiments, or ſhall put you upon the breach of Peace and Unity, (the preſervation of which, is the higheſt Duty, and even the very ſubſtance of Chriſtianity) to ſatisfie a frivolous ſcruple, one of the leaſt concerns of true Religion; or in ſhort, perſwade you *to do evil that good may come*, nay perhaps hurry you upon the moſt execrable evil to ſecure a good that in greateſt probability you may never want. In ſuch like Caſes you muſt not buy your peace at ſo dear a Rate, but prefer the *Peace of God and your own Conſciences* before a baſe compliance with the worſt of mankind.

Now from theſe obligations the Caſe of *offence* or *ſcandal* will eaſily be decided. If it be a matter purely indifferent, we ought to comply rather than offend our fellow Chriſtians: But if it be againſt our natural Rights by which we muſt ſubſiſt, or the poſitive Law of God, every one can ſoon reſolve his Conſcience. If that thing, indifferent in its own nature, be determined by ſecular Authority, the Caſe is as plain, for ſurely we muſt rather obey the Magiſtrate, than comply with a weak, or rather perhaps a ſtubborn Brother. 1. Becauſe it is the ſuperiour Obligation. 2. Becauſe the Magiſtrate will have no power left to him at all, if not in indifferent things, for others oblige of themſelves, or before. 3. Becauſe we have the moſt expreſs command from the Goſpel to obey the Supreme Power in all things that are not contrary to the Law of God. Therefore the breach of peace muſt lie upon thoſe that without cauſe take the offence, and it cannot be an excuſable infirmity: And tho' our Saviour denounces a * *wo to that man by whom the offence cometh*: Yet he ſeems little leſs than to exclude from a bleſſing him that unjuſtly will be offended, when he ſays * *Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended with me*.

* *Mat.* 18. 7.

* *Mat.* 11. 6.

Having

Having laid down the Chriſtian obligation in the fulleſt extent to follow the *Apoſtle's Rule of living peaceably with all men*; and thoſe *Reſtraints* from the wickedneſs of ſome mens diſpoſitions, by which an *actual peace may be impoſſible*; as alſo the unlawfulneſs of a general and popular compliance in all caſes: It will be neceſſary for our further incitement to the performance of this Duty thus regulated, to conclude with the great diſadvantages in the non-performance, which will redound either, 1. To the Publick, or, 2. To one another, in private Converſation.

Firſt, The great Miſchiefs to the publick from turbulent and unquiet Spirits.

The *Body Politick*, whether a Kingdom or Common-wealth, however vaſt and bulky it may ſeem, is a frame or conſtitution as tender and ſubject to indiſpoſitions, as a *Body Natural*: And there is no Member in the one or the other, tho' never ſo remote or inferiour, but by its malignity may eaſily diſturb and ſometimes deſtroy the whole. Every Subject whatſoever hath his peculiar Station and Office, in which all that he doth, is not for his own peculiar Good alone, but more eſpecially ought to be for the good of the Publick; the publick peace being his own preſervation. And to that End he is to quit many of his own leſſer Rights, which he might otherwiſe juſtly ſtand upon, to ſecure to himſelf protection from the Government in thoſe that are greater, and by which he muſt ſubſiſt. And ſurely then, tho' he hath the liberty of thinking, and may be as fond, as he pleaſes, of his own thoughts; it is the moſt eaſie ſubmiſſion to follow publick Orders in all external conformity, where the matters are indifferent, and where the Law of God hath not interpoſed; altho' thoſe Orders be not ſo agreeable to the projects or model of his own brain. Governours themſelves are ſometimes for-

ced to do more for peace ſake, when by publick connivance, Errors and Corruptions go unreformed, for fear of ſhaking the Fabrick by any extraordinary motion: As Phyſitians when they are to deal with craſie Bodies, dare not uſe many Medicines, which are otherwiſe moſt proper, for fear of ſtirring the humours, and doing more miſchief.

Chriſtianity, (the Religion we all profeſs with open mouths) tho' attended with the great and viſible Power of the Almighty, deſcended into the World in the moſt ſtill and calm manner, and by the moſt gentle gradations, ſtep by ſtep, advanced its intereſt in the Societies of mankind: becauſe the moſt *peaceable Author* of it, took an eſpecial care, that ſecular Authority might not in the leaſt be diſturbed by ſo great an alteration as muſt neceſſarily be made thereby in the hearts of men. Is not the great purpoſe then of our Religion wholly perverted, when its name is boldly ſet up in the front of a faction? But in truth the name is only uſed, the thing is far from them; for do we not ſee men raiſed into the greateſt jealouſies and fears for Religion, drive on furiouſly againſt the Enemies of it, or whom they will have to be ſo, and yet the while have no Religion at all themſelves? What a ſiding is there with this and the other zealous and conſcientious Sect, even by thoſe that have neither Zeal nor Conſcience but are deriders of both, and of ſtrict holineſs in all Sorts of Profeſſors? What a hurry and buſtle do they make about loſing of Religion, and yet make no uſe of it whilſt they have it? What a Noiſe for Liberty, and yet *uſing their liberty but for a cloak of maliciouſneſs?* It will be but Charity to think that the *Atheiſtical Diſſenter* is the leading man in our preſent Commotions; for it is hard to ſuppoſe thoſe Zealous adherers to the Goſpel in every nice punctilio, that ſtart at every thing, as an unlawful Impoſition, that they find not

not there, ſhould ſo ſtrangely overlook all thoſe grand Duties of *Peace*, and *ſubmiſſion to Government*, which run through all its Doctrines and Precepts, and are ſo inſeparable from it: And aſſuredly, as he joyns with them in declaiming againſt a Ceremony, becauſe it is too glorious and orderly an Ornament, for the Religion that he hates; ſo by the ſame Principles will he deſpiſe it and perhaps as malitiouſly Plot againſt it, when ever it ſhall put on their plainer dreſs.

The Publick, I ſay, may eaſily be brought into confuſion, but Chriſtianity muſt have no hand in it. Any ſingle perſon in whatſoever circumſtances may bring it about: If he be a great Man, noted for his Parts, and politick Head, pretending Love to his Country and Religion; tho' biaſſed by known prejudices, provoked with diſappointments, and wholy poſſeſſed with diſcontent; the work will ſoon be done: He ſhall have whole Legions of hot malevolent Spirits that ſhall liſt themſelves under his *Excellency*, and furiouſly carry on his private, by the Name of a publick Greivance. There are innumerable inſtances of this nature in all States; and in the Church, a ſingle Heretick by ſuch meaſures hath ſometimes brought over the beſt ſhare in the Chriſtian World.

Nay a little man may do the buſineſs, a mean and inconſiderable wretch may puſh down the Government: We need not go as far as *Naples* for an inſtance of this nature, our late confuſions can ſupply us nearer at hand, when the loweſt of the people, baſe and mechanick, threw out *the King* and the *Church*, the Nobility and Gentry, and turned the Government upſide down; advancing themſelves into the high places. And if we run back theſe diſturbances to their firſt Origin we may find them begun by not above two or three poor ſeditious Villains, nay perhaps the foundation firſt laid by ſome one ſingle pittiful Pamphleteer or factious Scribler. And

how-

how dismal were the Calamities? Thus a Plague or Pestilential Disease at first begun in some poor Cottage, or in some narrow by-street or Lane, noted for poverty brawls and filth; next creeps into the houses of the most opulent Citizens; at last assaults the Palaces of Nobles and Princes, and so spreads its Mortality over a whole Kingdom.

If an injury to a private person be so grievous a sin, that it remains unpardonable without satisfaction, where it can possibly be made: How far greater must it be to a Community of men, where the mischiefs may be so diffusive and irreparable, and the sufferers so numerous. Should any one, not designedly, but by an unhappy accident set his Neighbours house on fire, by which his Goods and all that he had, should be burnt; it would certainly grieve him, if he had any tenderness, all the days of his Life. Is it a less evil to raise a Combustion in the publick, or set a Kingdom in a flame? How greivous then were the sins of the Ring-leaders of our late Rebellion, nay of every one that moved but a finger in the cursed Cause? And we have never yet heard of a particular Repentance, or so much as an acknowledgment of their Crime: They have adapted it to their Consciences, and resolved the highest villany into an action well intended, and so it passes off without regret. It is true, they have received an Act of Oblivion, and so forgiveness of the injury from their offended Prince, the priviledge of Romish sinners to have *absolution* before *Penance*: But certainly the great Judg of Heaven and Earth must have another account for the blood of his people, and hath no where promised to remit such mighty Crimes upon a general or slight Repentance, or indeed none at all.

Take heed of factious Principles the seeds of so many Calamities: take heed of venting and promoting any dislikes against the Government in Church or State; of raising

raiſing fears and jealouſies to put men into confuſion. The Spirit of faction is ſo Sulphureous, that one particle touched the whole train will take fire, and a mean perſon may blow the Coal. If the Government be out of order, we need to take the more care leſt we promote the diſtemper, or increaſe the tumour. Take heed eſpecially of that ſort of *Zeal* that drives on furiouſly tho' in a good Cauſe. The meaneſt man and the loweſt thing or circumſtance may unluckily breed diſturbance for an Age: Tho' a well-meaning-Brother throw in but one *Mite* of Faction, the *Corban* will ſwell, and the treaſure fill up again, to carry on anew the good old Cauſe; and at the day of Judgment who ſhall be able to give an account for all the rapine, murder, all the dire effects of Fire and Sword, and the innumerable Calamities of a Civil War, produced by this Monſter of Faction and Schiſm, as it lay firſt diſperſed in ſingle Spirits? God will find out every cauſe, and how far by degrees theſe miſchiefs have workt up, whether from the practices, writings, or common talk, and diſcourſes of every ſingle diſſenter, and ſeditious promoter. But

2. To conclude, tho' unpeaceable Spirits extend their malevolence no further than the bounds of a private family or neighbourhood, they can do miſchief enough to make us miſerable; for beſides many fatal effects that fall out too often upon private Contentions, all friendſhip, the only comfort of humane Society, is ſuſpended, and that ſhire we have one in another in a manner quite loſt. Jealouſies and ſuſpitions, the Harpies of the mind, take up our whole thoughts; and the evil we contrive for others is firſt the torture of our own ſouls, and oft times at laſt falls on our own heads. Our Reaſon is ſo far from affording us releif under this dominion, that it rather becomes the more uſeful ſlave of our paſſions, and make us the more acute and daring in all the enterprizes of malice: And ſavage creatures by want of it, have leſs cruelty; for whatſoever is the fierceneſs of their nature, they agree well enough

nough with thoſe of their own kind. And as our reaſon is enſlaved ſo our Religion muſt be quite diſcarded; for un-peaceableneſs is not only contrary to the deſign of the Go-ſpel, as you have heard already, but in its own nature ſo fully poſſeſſes the heart of man, that there can be no poſſible room for Religion: The Grace of God can have no abode where all is in combuſtion: *The Spirit of the moſt High* will not enter a malicious man, whilſt he is poſſeſt with a Le-gion of evil ones. We may even ſhut up theſe doors, if *Peace and Charity* fail among us; we do but ſpoil one an-thers Religion, and turn it into Hypocriſie, like the *Phari-ſees*, poſſeſſed with the ſame *leaven of malice*, * *we ſhut up the Kingdom of heaven againſt men, neither going in our ſelves nor ſuffering them that are entring, to go in.* In a word, peace alone muſt qualifie us for all Goodneſs here and Glory hereafter: The *Word* and *Sacraments* are but formalities without it, or rather indeed aggravate our guilt: And the more converſant the turbulent Spirit is in *Sacred things*, the more raving and ungovernable, the more daring and do-ſparate in all black and melancholly deſigns, as you know our Saviour found the moſt *fierce* and *untameable Spirits* a-mongſt the * *Tombs*: With Satan therefore, the old Spirit of Faction, he is fitteſt to be tied down *with Chains of dark-neſs to be kept unto the Judgment of the great Day.* But if we live peaceably here one with another under the Goſpel of peace, then there will be joy, and comfort, and improve-ment too in all Spiritual Duties: And then ſhall we be fit-ted for the ſociety of Saints and Angels, with *Chriſt Jeſus the Prince of Peace*: Where all animoſities of the fleſh ſhall be laid aſide, our Bodies too ſubject to a ſplenatick and reſtleſs temper, ſhall be refined, and made glorified Bodies, *peaceable Subjects of that heavenly Kingdom*, where there ſhall be neither *Wars, nor Rumours of Wars*; but infinite and un-ſpeakable happineſs carried on in an Eternal and joyfull Peace and Tranquility. *Amen.*

* *Mat.* 23. 14.

* *Mar.* 5. 3. 4. *Mat.* 8. 28.

FINIS.